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imagery analysis report

Special Troops Training Facility
Jiloa, Nicaragua (S)



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SPECIAL TROOPS TRAINING FACILITY JILOA, NICARAGUA (S)

INTRODUCTION

1. [] This report provides information on Jiloa Military Training Facility (BE []) in Nicaragua and compares it to a similar facility, Guanabo Military Camp East (BE [] in Cuba.

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2. [] Jiloa Military Training Facility is in a remote portion of the Peninsula De Chiltepe on Lake Managua, 7.5 nautical miles (nm) north-northwest of Managua. Construction at this facility since December 1981 suggests that Jiloa will probably be used as a special-purpose training facility, possibly for unconventional warfare. A number of training areas at Jiloa bear a strong resemblance to Cuban facilities at Guanabo. The Guanabo camp is known to be occupied by an airborne-qualified Special-Troops (Tropas Especiales) unit. []

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BASIC DESCRIPTION

Jiloa Military Training Facility

3. [] Jiloa Military Training Facility is under development as a special-purpose training center, possibly for unconventional warfare. Training facilities at Jiloa include a Soviet-style type A (motorized rifle) obstacle course, a small-arms range, a special-purpose training range with derelict aircraft, a possible ambush-training area, hand-to-hand combat pits, and a probable-demolition training area (Figure 1).

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4. [] The Jiloa facility was constructed by the Sandinista government. Prior to the fall of the Somoza government, no military facility was present. The facility was first identified on satellite imagery in July 1980. It was then comprised of three buildings partially enclosing an open courtyard, one large and two small support buildings, one probable communications control building with a probable horizontal dipole antenna, one small-arms range in the early stages of construction, and one Soviet-style type A obstacle course under construction. No other training facilities were observed on the July 1980 coverage, but portions of the facility are heavily wooded and could conceal small-unit training. Through November 1981, periodic training was observed. In November, some cleared ground and trenches were apparent within the facility. In December, grading of a rectangular cleared area approximately 250 meters long was underway. During January and February 1982, four derelict aircraft were placed on this 250-meter graded area; one additional derelict aircraft and one fuselage were near this graded area. Training facilities established between December 1981 and February 1982 included the possible ambush-training area, consisting of a number of vehicles scattered through a wooded area surrounded on three sides by a trench; the hand-to-hand combat area, containing six circular, wall-enclosed pits and excavations for four additional pits; and the possible demolition-training area, containing a large open pit and two small, possible explosives-storage bunkers.

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Guanabo Military Camp East

5. [] A comparison reveals some similarities between the facility at Jiloa and Guanabo Military Camp East, Cuba. Guanabo, on the north coast of Cuba, 35 km east of Havana, is a unique installation in Cuba. Characteristic features and training facilities in this camp include a large airborne insignia, a probable infiltration/assault course, a special-purpose training range with derelict aircraft and fuselages, a probable demolition-training area, a possible ambush-training area, a Soviet-style type A obstacle course, numerous small-arms ranges, and 12 hand-to-hand combat pits (Figure 2).

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6. [] In addition to housing a special-troops unit, Guanabo also serves as an unconventional warfare center, probably for training Third World nationals.

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Similarities Between Jiloa and Guanabo

7. [] The Jiloa training facility and the Guanabo Military Camp East share common features.² Both installations contain a special-purpose training range. These ranges, which could support select phases of airborne or commando training, contain derelict aircraft and fuselages (Figure 3). Both installations contain circular, wall-enclosed pits, probably for hand-to-hand combat training (Figure 4). Other common features include their remote locations near water, small-arms ranges, possible ambush-training areas, and probable demolition-training areas with collocated explosives storage.

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8. [] In all likelihood, Jiloa was developed with Cuban assistance. Enough similarities exist between the two installations to indicate with relative certainty that Cuban influence is apparent in the Jiloa facility. The speed with which Jiloa is being developed, when compared with other military facilities under construction in Nicaragua, indicates that the development of Jiloa is a high-priority project for the Sandinista military.

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REFERENCES

IMAGERY

(S/D) All relevant satellite and selected aircraft imagery acquired from [] was used in the preparation of this report.

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DOCUMENTS

1. DET L, OPS GP, INSCOM. IR 2 240 7011 80, *3456th International Brigade-Terrorist Training Facility (U)*, 28 May 80, (CONFIDENTIAL [])
2. NPIC. Z-15153/82, *Unusual Construction Activity, Jiloa Military Training Facility, Nicaragua (S)*, 12 Jan 82 (SECRET [])

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(S) Comments and queries regarding this report are welcome. They may be directed to [] Third World Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, NPIC, []

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